/21 cont./

565 608 This, however, does not exhaust the role of the ward with regard to his foster parent. He is the main character in the joys and sorrows of his foster parent; in all the occasions of his life that have any importance. Thus, when his foster mother, or her husband, or one of their children dies, he bewails them bitterly, [765] dresses in mourning, lets his hair grow, buys the coffin at his own [764] expense, and takes care of the arrangements and the ceremonial for the mourning and the funeral of the deceased. When the funeral banquet is given, he provides a sheep or a horse and again arranges everything. The ward also is the main character [583] when the son of his foster mother abducts a girl to be his wife; if the relatives of the girl pursue the abductor, the princely ward comes to his aid with words and weapons and does not give up the abducted girl; subsequently he keeps her at his house until the matter is definitely settled, for none of the relatives of the abducted girl would dare to attack his home.

If, on the other hand, the marriage of the son or daughter [584] of the foster father is arranged peacefully by the voluntary consent of both sides, then here, too, the princely ward is considered the bridegroom's best man and presents the bride with money, a horse, etc.

The foster parents in turn do not fail to perform their duties with regard to their ward, whom they call their sun, their /22/ sacredness, and by whose name they swear. Every year at [431] Christmastide they give him presents, such as cheese, capons, and bread; at Easter, a lamb or a kid and "chumukhkvati." These presents are the obligatory outward signs of sincere liking and friendship on the part of lesser ones ("lower brotherhood") towards those of higher rank; with their cessation the mutual friendship is also broken off.

The sons of the foster mother are usually the bosom friends and accomplices of the ward in his nocturnal thieving adventures. [579] That is why a prince or nobleman always takes the sons of his foster mother with him on his thieving expeditions; he knows that

/22 cont./

565 they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for him if necessary.
608

When a ward dies, the grief and sorrow of the foster parents
[579] are unbounded; for his funeral they furnish a shroud and money;
[764] they also bring one or two bulls, sheep, etc. for the funeral
[765] repast for the deceased. When their ward marries, they give
him all kinds of assistance through their personal labor. They
[585] also present him with fattened animals and bring presents to
his bride as well.

608 Among the Abkhaz another type of wardship also exists,
565 namely, that of an adult man being invited to assume the role
796 of ward. The Abkhaz peasant invites such a man with the words, "I wish to take you into my house and honor you according to my means." On the appointed day, the person invited goes to the house of his future foster father and takes along a few additional people. During the supper the host and his relatives kneel down in front of their ward-to-be and give him a glass of wine; they then stand and one of them addresses to him the following speech: "From this day on we regard you as having been nursed in our family; we are of the same spirit as you and will begrudge you nothing; we hope that you, too, will begrudge us nothing; you will be held in higher esteem than the other wards." After this they present him with a few rubles and give something to his companions (khadzh /see foreign text/). While handing over the presents, they say, "Vadcha enup" (a present for you). This ceremony ends in the following way: on a carpet, spread on the floor, a chest is placed, on which the wife of the host of the house, i.e., the future foster mother, seats herself; the other women surround her. Then the ward-to-be enters through the open door, stands in front of the hostess seated on the chest, greets her, /23/ and thrice touches with his lips the nipple of her breast, or, as the Abkhaz say, "bites her nipples three times"; after each time he repeats, "from this day on you are my own mother." And indeed, from
608 this time on exactly the same mutual relations obtain between
565 them as in the first case where another's child is fully reared. It need hardly be said that, besides the princes and nobles, the

/27 cont./

764 [203] to come to the mourning ceremony without being invited. The deceased is put in a coffin. The women in mourning apparel, barefooted, their dresses torn, bloody scratches on their faces, and their hair loose, arrange themselves behind the coffin. From the other side the male and female mourners approach the coffin. The arrangement of the lamentations is as follows. Let us suppose that four or five women are coming to bewail the deceased. As soon as they enter the yard, they immediately start weeping and shouting "avav," and at the same time they put their fingers to their temples and continue to scratch their faces with them down to the chin until they have finished their "avav." The women sitting by the coffin answer their "avav" with the same exclamation. The mourners slowly approach the house. Their wails and sobs gradually become louder; finally they enter the house, where the real communal mourning takes place. The mourners enter the house, beating their foreheads and breasts; they kneel down before the coffin and thus bewail the deceased.

In another part of the house the belongings of the deceased are put on display, his clothes and his weapons. After the mourning of the deceased, weeping and sobbing are done over his belongings also.

Sympathy for the relatives of the deceased is expressed by [195] visitors in the following manner: "Had this but not happened to you; had you but heard of my death instead, etc."

764 608 /28/ The foster mother of the deceased or her children, when they come to bewail the ward, break out in wails and cries even a verst from the house. In the yard they are met by people who have been stationed there for this purpose and who lead them by the hand into the house. This does not prevent the new arrivals from scratching their cheeks and necks on the way until they bleed, nor from beating their heads against the house-posts until they fall down before the coffin half-dead and with tears flowing. The foster father and his children likewise beat their heads and faces.

764 [965] On the day of the funeral, lamentation for the deceased is general. Then, after the mourning, a funeral repast is arranged and all the guests are treated to bread, wine, and lenten fare, and by evening the deceased is buried.

/28 cont./

766 It is necessary to point out one more characteristic feature. When the head of a family dies and the sad procession has just started out for the burial-ground with his remains, a rope is thrown over his house; the ends are held by two people who pull it first one way and then the other. The meaning of this curious custom, which is also widespread in Mingrelia, is the following: with the death of the head of a family and the removal of his body to the burial-ground, the house begins to shake and threatens to collapse, and in order to avert this they have recourse to the rope. After the body has been carried out and the house remains undamaged, a rifle is fired as a sign of joy.

764 Graves for men are dug waist-deep, for women still deeper, [562] because in the opinion of certain Abkhaz, women in general are sly and cunning (paivan), and the Abkhaz proverb says, "Don't [539] tell your wife what is on your mind or she will crawl out even from her grave and divulge your secret." Therefore a deceased woman is buried deeper and covered with more earth.

When the deceased has been placed in the grave, it is rimmed with wooden boards and earth is poured in from above.

The Abkhaz do not have special burial-grounds. Each family has its own burial-ground. More often, high and mountainous places near a common road serve as burial-grounds. The tourist or traveler will easily observe that in Abkhazia the best and most poetic spots are occupied by graveyards.

765 The attention paid to the deceased continues long after his burial. The mother and the wife of the departed, his foster mother or her daughters, dressed in mourning and barefoot, visit the fresh grave every day, morning and evening, and bitterly bewail the deceased /29/ and beg him to assist them in various daily troubles, to intercede for them with other deceased persons, to give them their regards, etc. This continues up to 40 days or until the "Saturday mourning banquet." Until this time, the belongings of the deceased are displayed in the house and mourners as they arrive first weep over these belongings and then also over the grave. Likewise until this time, and often for the duration of a full year, a portion for the deceased is placed on

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [775] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes marula (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pistol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair [302] is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [262] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few

/29 cont./

765 rams, and, in general, whatever they can afford; furthermore
[262] they bring various sweetmeats prepared with butter and with honey, and also matsoni (sour /30/ milk), etc. One person in the procession holds in his hand a branching, tree-like candle, to which is fastened a strip of calico, green in color and soaked in wax. At the ends of the larger and smaller branches similar strips are hung, which are stirred by the wind like the leaves of a tree. (If the procession takes place at night, a few lighted candles are fastened to the branching candle as well as to the horns of bulls). Slowly the sad procession approaches the house and enters the yard, where it is met by the others. Here there is wailing and lamentation by the men and women separately.
[182] After this the bulls and rams are killed, each with the words, "It is offered to your soul."

The next day, i.e., on the day of the aphskhuvra, a great number of people gather. By noon one of the relatives of the deceased unties his horse and stands in the middle of a meadow, while the men and women form a circle around him. Then the horse is led around the circle three times, with the deceased's next of kin following behind, barefoot, bare-headed, in mourning attire, and weeping bitterly. The men beat their breasts and faces. The women stand in a circle divided into two groups alternately crying "avav." This ceremony ends with the horse being led out of the circle. From this time on, all earthly signs (remains) of the deceased are considered to have been destroyed; up to this time the deceased has been considered to be invisibly present in the gathering.

After this the guests seat themselves at a dinner. On the meadow, under the open sky, a long tablecloth has been spread out for them and various dishes have been prepared. Particularly
[262] noteworthy are spoons, cups, glasses, thimbles, etc. made out of cheese. The candles described above are placed there, too.

It must be noted that even though this banquet involves great expense, it is not burdensome to the hosts, since the expenses are shared, not only by the relatives, but also by the whole village where such a funeral repast is held.

/30 cont./

765 526 After the meal, the dzhiriti takes place, reminiscent of the tournaments of the Middle Ages. Now the fair sex occupies the passageway near the house. Young men on horseback assemble in front of the beauties and vie with each other in attempts to display their wit, inventiveness, and knowledge in speeches, and their bravery in the dzhigitovka /trick-riding/ which will follow.

The main dzhigitovka, tarchei /see foreign text/, consists of the following. One of the competing riders accepts from the host of the feast /31/ or from one of the beauties some strips of chintz, a small sewn boot, a rosary of chestnuts, or something else, and, holding this tarchei in his hand, he gallops ahead with it while the other lads pursue him and try to catch him and take away the tarchei. If someone is successful in this, the tarchei passes into the hands of the one who has taken it away from the first rider; then that one races off, and the others again chase after him. The one who escapes capture and manages to bring the tarchei back to the place where the competition started is the winner. The horsemen's competition does not end with this, however; they continue to prance around on horseback, pick up money from the ground at full gallop, etc.

765 541 Sometimes there are also horse-races at the mourning banquet. Children of eight to nine years of age are horsemen. A goal is pointed out to the competitors, and the first one to reach it wins something. In this case, the hosts present the winners with the horse of the deceased, with some animal, or with a khak (arshin or span) of chintz.

VI.

Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz

771 "Up to the year 1867," wrote Mr. A. in his excellent article on the Abkhaz, "the religious situation among the Abkhaz was absurd in the extreme. One found there the rites of all religious doctrines, from fetishism to Christianity. These people had no precise conception of any religion, but adopted from all of them

[765 cont.] The mother, The wife, and the foster mother mourn at the grave for forty days in the morning and in the evening, and for the same length of time, or sometimes for a whole year, food for the deceased is put on the table during meals.

[766] The first memorial service takes place on the fortieth day, the second one during the second year, usually in the autumn. On the evening preceding the latter (ap's-khuvra = assigning to the soul), the clothes, the horse with the saddle, and the weapons of the deceased are laid out, there is mourning in the house and at the grave, and sacrificial animals are slaughtered. A party of village members in mourning clothes and barefoot bring up animals and food; among them a man carries lighted candles on a twig-shaped holder, as do the oxen on their horns. The next day the horse of the dead man is led around in a circle three times in a field, and the relatives follow it, lamenting in mourning clothes; after this, the soul of the dead, which until then had remained invisibly among them for the time being, has finally departed from the earth. After the memorial feast the youths and men hold oratory exercises, shooting matches, and races, as among the Khevsur (see p. 738 [untranslated], and below, p.30).

The burial grounds, which contain the graves for each kin group, usually lie on elevations and are fenced in. Small houses of planks with shingle roofs--in contrast to the usual building style--are erected over the graves, which are themselves lined with boards, and fruit trees are planted nearby.

Among the Abkhaz, too, there is the belief that the souls of the dead have the same needs as the living, and for this reason they build these grave-shelters, lay slices of melon and cucumber on the graves, and for a year after death put food for them on the table during the meals. At the second memorial celebration the father of the house places in the yard a millet-dumpling over which wine has been poured and pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animal. If the souls are neglected, they come to the house at night and whistle, whereupon food and wine is given to them. When the souls, the "outer ones," are angered, they bring about weakness and sickness among animals and men. Then one tries to console

766

766 DEVIANT MORTUARY PRACTICES--abbreviated and extended funerals; distinctive mortuary rites in special cases of death (e.g., for an enemy, stranger, executed criminal, pauper, slave, child, woman dying in childbirth, chief, shaman, warrior, person dying abroad, victim of accidental death, suicide, homicide, victim of epidemic or loathsome disease); ceremonies at the death of animals; etc. See also:

Disposition of war casualties 727
Notions about loathsome diseases 753
Human sacrifice 782
Disposition of miscarriages and stillbirths . . 845
Disposition of victims of infanticide 847

/28 cont./

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/31 cont./

771 whatever stood out most sharply and acted most strongly upon their almost childish imagination" (1). Madame Giorgidze says: "At

1. See Sborn. sved. o kavk. gorts., No. V.

present the majority of the Abkhaz profess the Christian religion, the minority Mohammedan. In spite of this, the Abkhaz is little informed in either of the two religions and is really a heathen rather than Christian or Moslem" (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888.

1.

775 766 The Souls of the Dead -- Their Wanderings on Earth

The Abkhaz believes that human life does not end with earthly existence, but that it continues after death, /32/ or, in the words of the Abkhaz, "on the other side." He believes, in addition, that this life beyond the grave continues at the very place where the deceased is buried. It is not enough, therefore, to take a drowned body out of the river to bury it, for the soul of the deceased must also be evoked from the water and brought into the grave in which the body of the drowned man is buried. This is the ceremony of the evocation and capture of a drowned person's soul. Men and women gather on both sides of the river from which the corpse of the drowned man has been recovered. Across the river, from one bank to the other, a silk thread is stretched, from which a leather knapsack is hung, its lower end almost touching the water. The men and women then begin to the sound of the balalaika. The Abkhaz is convinced that the soul of the dead leaves the water and enters the knapsack when it hears the sounds of the balalaika and the singing. When the Abkhaz think that the soul has entered the bag, one of the men jumps into the water and ties it up. They then carry the

[534] [533]

/32 cont./

775 knapsack with great rejoicing to the burial-ground, where,
[766] through a hole drilled in the knapsack, the captured soul passes into the grave of the one who drowned.

769 In Abkhazia the dead are highly honored. The burial-grounds, as we have said, lie on high, picturesque places and
[764] are surrounded by fences. Shingled houses of a kind the Abkhaz do not make for themselves are built over the graves. Near the graves various fruit trees are planted -- apple, pear, peach, quince, etc. On the graves themselves the Abkhaz lay slices of melons, watermelons, cucumbers, etc. All this serves to confirm the belief that beyond the grave the souls of the dead require food, drink, lodging, etc., just like the living.

And in fact the Abkhaz do believe that the dead will enjoy, for example, the piece of melon placed on the grave. Because of this belief, for almost a full year after a death,
[264] a special share of each meal is laid on the table for the deceased, and banquets are held in his memory, etc. Besides this, annual funeral-feasts are held on the eve of the paternal Saturday for those recently deceased, and on the paternal Saturday itself funeral-feasts are held for those deceased longer. At the slaughter of the sacrificial animal, the head of the family says, "If there
769 is a life beyond the grave, here is this (offering) to your soul."
782 Then as food is prepared and placed on the tablecloth, the head of the family stands in front of the tablecloth and again says, "Deceased ones /33/, grant us the blessing of your souls! Do not harm us by death (mortification)! Make us and our cattle increase (multiply)! etc. At the conclusion of this invocation, he makes the sign of the cross in the air over the tablecloth with an iron spit and says, "All this, prepared by the power of fire and water, is sacrificed to your souls, if indeed there be a life beyond the grave." Having said this, the head of the family takes a glass of wine and drinks it; after this he puts pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificed animal into a slice of gomi, pours a little wine over it, and throws it into the yard, saying:
775 "And this is for you, guiding and escorting souls." From this we
769 perceive that in Abkhaz belief the living relatives of the dead

/51 cont./

782 one of those present begins to glorify the god: "Anchva
731 dukhva zlyphkha khkhaura!" "O you who descends from
574 heaven with lightning and ascend to heaven with thunder, who knows the number of the stars in heaven and of the sands at the bottom of the sea ..." etc., and he concludes the poem with the words, "akhdau." All those present, divided into two groups, repeat every line of the hymn in turn, always three times over.

782 The killing of one of the herd by lightning unfailingly
821 evokes prayer to Aphi; on the other hand, if he is not appeased by sacrifice, a repetition of his visit must be expected. The owner of the dead animal invites the inhabitants of the village, without distinction as to age or sex. On the spot where the animal was killed, a tower is built about one and a half sagene in height, so that beasts of prey cannot climb it. All those present surround the killed animal, join hands, and dance, half of them singing "Voetla" and the other half answering "Chaupar," and they raise the animal onto the tower, still singing and dancing, and leave it there as a victim for the birds of prey. Then the owner of the animal killed by lightning sacrifices a bull to Aphi, at the same time thanking him for the present visit and begging him nonetheless to spare him future visits. Various dishes are prepared from the meat of the sacrificed animal; bread, cheese, and wine are brought, and those present feast all day long at the expense of the man who suffered the loss. The day the animal was killed by lightning becomes so memorable in the family that has thus been visited by Aphi that

[527] neither the head of the family /52/ nor his children will give
[431] anyone anything on the anniversary of that day, saying that they expect a visit from Aphi on that day.

[766] The same ceremony is performed when a person has been struck by lightning. During the dance around the corpse, none of the relatives of the dead man dares to weep; otherwise all the participants will be struck dead by a thunder-bolt.

/52 cont./

821 766 "Recently," writes Mr. Giorgidze in the newspaper Iveriia of 1888, "a man was being buried with laments and sobbing. At that moment two bulls grazing nearby were struck by a thunderbolt and immediately the crying and sobbing turned into dancing and singing, "Atlarchouph." The dead bulls were lifted up and placed on a tree, and the deceased was buried in a deathly silence."

The corpse of a person struck by a thunderbolt is placed in a coffin, put on a tower, and left there until nothing but his bones remain; the coffin is then taken down and buried with the normal burial ceremonies and the celebration of the funeral-banquet established by custom.

175 769 [766] [821] It was probably this custom of such placing or suspending of the corpses of those killed by Aphi that led the ancient Greco-Roman writers and the geographer Vakhushti to state that in Abkhazia and Colchis dead men were not buried, but their corpses hung in trees. These are Vakhushti's words: "Though Christians by creed, the Abkhaz do not know their religion and are therefore considered to be idolaters. And indeed, instead of burying their dead, they dress them in their best clothes and weapons, lock them in boxes, and place them in trees." Apollonius Rhodius (250-200 B.C.) wrote of Colchis, "Many grapes and willows grew there, from the tops of which corpses of the dead were suspended by chains. Even now the inhabitants of Colchis consider it a crime to burn corpses of men or even to bury them and cover them with burial mounds; they are put in undressed hides of bulls and suspended from trees far from the city. But the earth as well as the air gets its own, for the corpses of women are buried in it; such is their law" (1). The same thing is

[113] 1. Greko-Rimskiie pisateli o kavkaze /Greco-Roman authors on the Caucasus/, by Gaff, p. 49.

attested in Variae Historiae: "The Colchi put their dead in hides, sew them up and hang them on trees" (2). Nymphodorus

[765 cont.]

A C 551 Devlet-khan, Tatema, Kistaman, Tepsike, Gosop'o khuraya (= round prince's-daughter), etc.

A 766 Death. In Abkhazia, when someone has been struck by lightning, he is laid in a coffin, and this is hung on a tree (as in old Lazistan, see above, p. 671 [untranslated], in Siberia, and other places), until the body has completely decayed; then the bones are buried.

C 766 In the sixteenth century the Cherkess used to seat the body of a nobleman, after having removed the entrails, on a tall, wooden bedstead in the field for a week. The two nearest relatives stood nearby, and on the bed was a girl who brushed away the flies with a silk cloth stuck on an arrow, while the first of his wives sat at his head without weeping. Afterwards the body, with clothing and weapons, was laid in a split and hollowed tree trunk, along with part of the gifts, silver vessels, bows, arrows, and the like, which relatives, friends, and serfs had brought, and set on the ground at the burial-place; over it was raised a mound whose height showed how much esteem the deceased had enjoyed. As a sacrifice for the dead, the innocence of a twelve to fourteen-year-old girl was offered, which the youths attempted to take by force as she lay on an ox-skin. After the burial a servant led the dead man's bridled horse to the grave on several days and called him to eat three times.

A C 764 Now deceased persons are laid to rest with the assistance of a Christian or Mohammedan clergyman (mullah). The lamentation for the dead at the coffin and amidst the clothing and weapons of the deceased, the feast for the dead, etc. re-
A [171] semble the customs of the Khevsur (see p. 737 and following [untranslated]); here, however, male mourners, too, kneel at the coffin. While the body is being carried to the grave, a rope is thrown over the roof and pulled back and forth in order to determine whether the house, which has been severely shaken by the departure of the deceased, still stands firm (as in Mingrelia). In earlier times, the Cherkess also threw the right ear of his horse into the grave, after they had first put the reins into the dead man's hands and led the horse around the grave three times (cf. p. 80). The mother, the wife, and the foster

Cherkess RH5

A 775 [755] [766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

A 775 766 When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

A 175 771 [767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

A [778] [788] C 771 A [771] A 772 [771]

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

[770 cont.]

231 (atlar-tšoup'), they lay the animal on a quickly erected, three-
[782] meter-high framework or in a tree. The owner sacrifices an ox
and prays to be spared in the future; then they eat the meat of
the sacrificial animal, bread, and cheese, drink wine, and feast
• 766 the entire day. The Abkhaz proceed in the same way for a per-
son struck by lightning, but no one may weep lest the god be-
come angry (see p. 87).

789 During drought one also turns to Ap'i to send rain; an
[782] ox is sacrificed, and at the feast songs of thanks and praise
(antšva-ryšva) are sung in alternating chant. In order to evoke
rain magic similar to that customarily practiced among the
Balkan peoples is used (cf. also p. 64). The girls from the vil-
lage stricken with drought place a female doll embodying the
drought on a donkey and lead it to the river; here they put the
doll on a raft made of twigs and straw, ignite it, and allow it to
drift. They pull the donkey by force through the water, and if
he brays, there will be rain.

755 Various gods are called upon in case of illness. Ague,
[753] delirium, and the like accompanying serious illness are attributed
to the presence of the supreme god (Antsar mz) in the body of the
sufferer. In order to cure him, they sing and dance about him
and even force him to do the same; then they sacrifice bread
[782] and a goat or sheep in the vicinity of the house, during which
no woman may be present; an old man with a candle circles
the sick person and pleads with the god to forgive him and de-
liver him. He also prays afterwards to Michael-Gabriel.

In case of fever they look for help from the "Mother of
the Waters"; she lives, according to them, in a clear lake or
[776] spring, is beautiful, has brown hair and laughing eyes, and likes
to live for a while with a man, like the mermaids. An old woman
touches the water with some object belonging to the feverish
person and begs the goddess to release him if she has enthralled
him. Then she ladles up a few drops of water on some alder-
leaves and holds them over the fire in the house so that the fever
may leave as quickly as the water on the leaves. Finally the
old woman moves away quickly, with the wish that the fever, too,